

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

Further, while the foregoing discussion is directed to the leash and tethering assembly art, it is envisioned that such a quick connect coupling assembly as described herein will have numerous other practical applications including, but not limited to, tie downs for tools and equipment, securing luggage and/or sporting equipment, temporary barrier devices, body harnesses, and key chains, as well as in the area of robotics, including integration into automated factory assembly line operations, and remotely controlled devices utilized by military, law enforcement, emergency, and rescue personnel, just to name a few.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 14 with the following amended paragraph:

In order to accomplish such quick release of the coupling assembly, the present invention further comprises a release structure preferably in the form of a release or positioning cable formed of metallic or other applicable material having sufficient structural integrity to be movable axially along its own length and to exert an axially directed force on a coupling assembly to be described in greater detail hereinafter. The term "structural

integrity" refers to the structural features of the release cable being of a material with sufficient rigidity, while still being flexible, to exert the aforementioned axially directed force on the coupling assembly or otherwise structured to be axially moveable along the length of the lead so as to exert the aforementioned force on the coupling assembly and thereby orient the coupling assembly in a disconnect position, as will be explained in greater ~~detailed~~ detail hereinafter.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

An additional embodiment of the present invention includes the coupling assembly structured to provide a quick attachment and detachment of the distal, free end of the lead to the attachment assembly mounted on the animal. In addition, ~~[[an]]~~ a similarly structured coupling assembly may be used to connect opposite free ends of the attachment assembly to one another around the animal in an intended fashion. In the aforementioned coupling assembly, first and second components are structured so as to be attached to one another in a manner which only requires a single hand of the handler or user of the leash assembly of the present invention. Quick and easy release of the two components of the coupling assembly from one another is accomplished by manipulation of the activation assembly and movement of the release structure mounted

within the lead, as set forth above. More specifically, each of the components of the present invention may be positioned into a predetermined aligned engagement with one another such that a pushing force exerted on the first and second components of the coupling assembly will cause a quick and efficient attachment of the two components to one another. Such quick attachment can be accomplished without manipulation of a spring biased plunger normally associated with generally known, swivel type coupling assemblies. Further, the coupling assembly may include an alignment assembly structured and disposed to facilitate the aforementioned predetermined aligned engagement of the components with one another. The alignment assembly preferably comprises magnetic surfaces on each component of the coupling assembly cooperatively disposed in engageable relation with one another when the components are aligned.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 22, line 25 with the following amended paragraph:

For purposes of clarity the structural details of the preferred embodiments of Figure 6-8, are explained with reference to coupling assemblies 16' and 16" as indicated in the aforementioned Figures. It is again to be emphasized that the structural components of the coupling assemblies 16' and 16" may be ~~similarly~~ similar. One common feature of the different embodiments

of Figure 6-8 is the ability to accomplish a quick and efficient attachment and release of the components of the respective coupling assemblies 16' and 16", such as while utilizing only a single hand of the user. Further, attachment can be accomplished without the physical depression or other manipulation of the spring biased plunger 51 or any similar component.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 2 with the following amended paragraph:

More specifically, in at least one preferred embodiment, the actuation member 162 of the electromotive release mechanism 160 comprises a distal portion 163 structured to normally dispose the locking members 62' in the outwardly extending locking orientation, such as, for example, via displacement of the locking members 62', as illustrated in ~~Figures 25, 26, and 28~~ Figures 25A, 26B, and 28A. Additionally, the distal portion 163 of the actuation member 162 is structured to selectively dispose the locking members 62' into a retracted orientation, thereby permitting the first component 18' and the second component 22' of the coupling assembly 16' to be detached from one another. ~~In the embodiment of Figures 25 and 28,~~ the The distal portion 163 of the actuation member 162 is movably disposable between an extended displacement configuration such that the locking members 62' are disposed in the outwardly extending locking orientation, as illustrated in Figures 25A and 28A, and a

retracted non-displacement configuration such that the locking members 62' are disposed in the retracted orientation, as illustrated in Figures 25B and 28B. In at least one alternate embodiment, the distal portion 163 may comprise a magnetically charged material, such as, by way of example only, an electromagnetic, so as to further facilitate positioning the locking members 62' between the outwardly extending locking orientation and the retracted orientation.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 28, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

In the one further embodiment ~~of Figure 26~~, the distal portion 163 is movably disposable between a non-displacement configuration such that the locking members 62' are disposed in the retracted orientation, as illustrated in Figure 26A and a displacement configuration such that the locking members 62' are disposed in the outwardly extending locking orientation, as illustrated in Figure 26B. In this embodiment, the actuation member 162 is structured to rotate about an actuation axis ~~164~~ 162', as illustrated in Figure 26C, wherein the required rotation may be accomplished by way of an electromotive release mechanism 160 comprising a rotary solenoid.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 29, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

To facilitate actuation of the electromotive release mechanism 160, an actuation interface 166 is provided and is structured to facilitate selective actuation of the electromotive release mechanism 160, via selective application of an electrical current to the electromotive release mechanism 160, as desired by the user.

The actuation interface 166 may comprise a direct interconnection to the activation assembly 80 or 82 such as, for example, an electrical wire extending along the lead 10 between the rechargeable power supply 81' of the activation assembly 80 or 82 and the electromotive release mechanism 160. As such, a selective activation member 44', as described herein, may be utilized to selectively actuate the electromotive release mechanism 160 via selective application of an electrical current from the rechargeable power supply 81'.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 30, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

In at least one embodiment, the actuation interface 166 is disposed in a communicative relationship with a voice activated control module 110, also as described herein, thereby allowing the electromotive release mechanism 160 to be remotely actuated. One further embodiment of the present invention comprises a manual release mechanism 167 interconnected to the actuation interface 166, as illustrated in ~~Figure 27~~ Figures 27A and 27B, the manual

release mechanism 167 structured to permit manual actuation of the electromotive release mechanism 160, thereby allowing the first component 18' and the second component 22' to be quickly and easily detached from one another.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 31, line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

In order to accomplish such quick and easy attachment of the components 18' and 22' together into the attached position of Figures 6 and 8, the first and second components 18' and 22' should be disposed in predetermined aligned engagement with one another. Such predetermined aligned engagement may be defined by an axial alignment of the first component 18' with the second component 22' as best shown in Figure 7. Once the first and second components 18' and 22' are in the aforementioned axial alignment, forced positioning of these two components 18' and 22' towards one another as indicated by directional arrows 70 and 71 will cause sliding contact of the leading surface portion 65 with the periphery of the receiving aperture 69 resulting in the predetermined aligned engagement of the first and second components 18' and 22'. The cooperatively structured configuration of the first and second components 18' and 22' of the preferred embodiment of the coupling assembly 16' allows the predetermined aligned engagement and attachment of the first and second components 18' and 22' by the

user with a single hand.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 32, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

As set forth above in order to accomplish a quick and easy attachment of the components 18' and 22' to one another in the locked position of Figures 6 and 8, the first and second components 18' and 22' are disposed in axial alignment with one another. To further assist the axial alignment of the first and second components 18' and 22', each of the embodiments of Figures 6 through 8 also preferably include an attraction assembly 75 which facilitates the axial alignment and automatic attachment of the components 18' and 22' to one another. Such an attraction assembly 75 is mounted on the coupling assembly 16' in the form of correspondingly positioned, attractive, mating or engaging surfaces. In the embodiment of illustrated Figure 6, the attraction assembly 75 includes at least the exposed annular surface 72 of the first component 18' being formed of a magnetic material and configured to attract a similar annular surface 74 of the second component 22', also formed of a magnetic material. In the locking position of Figure 6, these magnetically attractive surfaces 72 and 74 will normally be brought into confronting engagement with one another. The provision of the magnetically attractive surfaces 72 and 74 and their relative disposition to one

another will facilitate the axial alignment of the components 18' and 22' as well as the inwardly directed connecting force indicated by directional arrows 70 and 71 such that the first and second components 18' and 22' are automatically attached. In at least one embodiment, the attraction assembly 75 utilizes magnetic propulsion to achieve automatic attachment of the first and second components 18' and 22' by including an array of magnetic surfaces 72 or 74 having alternating polarities, or an array of magnetic surfaces 72 or 74 having similar polarities but exhibiting progressively stronger or weaker magnetic forces.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 34, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

In addition to the ability to achieve easy and effective engagement or attachment of the components of the coupling assembly 16', at least one embodiment of present invention comprises an electromotive propulsion mechanism 170, as illustrated in ~~Figure 28~~ Figures 28A and 28B, structured to at least temporarily impart a separation force between the first component 18' and the second component 22'. More in particular, the electromotive propulsion mechanism 170 of the present invention comprises at least one propulsion member 172, however, in one preferred embodiment, the electromotive propulsion mechanism 170 comprises a plurality of propulsion members 172 disposed in a spaced apart relation to one

another, as illustrated in ~~Figure 28~~ Figures 28A and 28B. The propulsion members 172 preferably comprise an elongated configuration, as illustrated, and are disposed adjacent a propulsion interface 174 formed between abutting portions of the first component 18' and the second component 22' of the coupling assembly 16', as best shown in Figure 28A.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 37, line 10 with the following amended paragraph:

A further embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in Figure 29 and includes an electromotive release mechanism 160 having an actuation member 162 comprising a propulsion member 172'. In this embodiment, the electromotive release mechanism 160, more specifically, the actuation member 162, is structured to dispose the propulsion member 172' between a secured configuration and a separated configuration via disposition of a distal portion 163 of the actuation member 162 between a displacement configuration and a non-displacement configuration, respectively. As shown, the propulsion member 172' is structured to extend through a portion of the first component 18' and to contact an inner portion of the second component 22', thereby exerting a separation force in a direction substantially normal to a propulsion interface 174', as indicated by directional ~~arrows~~ arrow 176'. The separation force is sufficient to cause the first component 18' and the second

component 22' to detach from one another when each of the plurality of locking members 62' is disposed in the retracted orientation.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 46, line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

Further with regard to the embodiment of Figure 9 the housing 84 includes a handle structure generally indicated as 89 which may be dimensioned and configured to have a hollow interior so as to house an electrical power supply used to energize at least the drive motor 88. Such an electrical power supply of course may be in the form of a rechargeable direct current battery pack, or another type of rechargeable power supply such as, by way of example, a solar power supply having storage capabilities, structured to supply sufficient power to operate the drive motor 88. The housing ~~[[84]]~~ 84' may also include a recharge port as at ~~[[83]]~~ 83' to permit interconnection of the rechargeable direct current battery pack to a source of power, such as via a standard household current power source, as shown in Figure 4B. It should also be noted that the overall configuration of the housing 84 could be such as to include an apertured configuration as at 96 which along with the dimension and configuration of the battery casing segment of the handle structure 89 may form a handle or grip to facilitate carrying or manipulation of the activation assembly 80.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 51, line 25 with the following amended paragraph:

As previously described, the switching assembly 90 may be employed to activate the electrical current to the electromagnet when quick and easy release of the first and second components 18' and 22' is desired. In at least one embodiment of the present invention, the switching assembly 90 comprises part of an electrical circuit which directly applies the electrical current to the electromagnet, while in at least one other embodiment, the switching assembly 90 utilizes a fiber optic circuit which indirectly causes the electrical current to be applied to the electromagnet. The switching assembly 90 may further be structured so as to permit the handler to transmit a small electrical impulse to the attachment assembly 26 worn by the animal, thereby directing a small electrical shock, vibration, or other electrical stimulation to the animal, such as have been proven to be an effective training tool. In a preferred embodiment, the handler can selectively adjust the magnitude of the electrical impulse to suit the size and temperament of the animal being trained.